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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 002058

SIPDIS

STATE FOR IO/SHA, DRL/MLA, WHA/CAR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/12/2010

TAGS: PHUM CU BO DR

SUBJECT: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND CHR-61: EUROPEAN  
AMBASSADORS ON CUBA, BELARUS RESOLUTIONS

REF: SANTO DOMINGO 1507

Classified By: DCM Lisa Kubiske. Reason: 1.4 (a) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador approached both the French and the British ambassadors here about helping convince President Fernandez to cast the Dominican vote in favor of the draft resolution on Cuba in CHR-61. The Ambassador noted that, despite his repeated and extensive conversations with Fernandez, the Dominican president was strongly inclined to abstain. UK Ambassador Andrew Ashcroft undertook to urge Fernandez to reconsider. On the draft resolution on Belarus, Ashcroft noted great interest in London but said he was doing nothing here. The French ambassador has received no instructions concerning UNHRC issues. The Dutch Ambassador, representing the EU Presidency, has received instructions for a joint demarche with us on the Belarus resolution. End summary.

Cuba

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2. (C) The Ambassador, accompanied by Embassy officers, on April 11-12 urged the French and British ambassadors to help persuade President Fernandez to cast the Dominican Republic's vote for the Cuba resolution at CHR-61. The Ambassador said he had spoken extensively on several occasions (most recently on April 8) with Fernandez about the importance of continuing Santo Domingo's previous support for the CHR's scrutiny of Cuba. However, the Ambassador noted, Fernandez seemed strongly inclined to abstain on this year's resolution, because of his political party's historical ties with Cuba. The Ambassador asked both of the European ambassadors what they could do.

3. (C) French Ambassador Jean-Claude Moyret declined to engage on the issue and said he had received no instructions on CHR issues. British Ambassador Andrew Ashcroft offered to speak with Fernandez, show him the "bland" draft resolution, and ask him how he could afford not support it -- both because of its minimalist content and as a signal of commitment to freedom and democracy. Ashcroft said that at least one European official visitor to Cuba had "spoken out strongly" on human rights issues even after the EU's recently "renewed detente" with the Castro regime.

Belarus

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4. (C) Regarding the draft resolution on Belarus in CHR-61, Ashcroft said he had not taken any action. He did note great interest in London in passing the Belarus resolution. The EU, he said, had decided not to divide its efforts on additional country-specific resolutions, for example on Africa, and instead to emphasize Belarus.

5. (C) Separately, Dutch Ambassador Bart Schortinghuis confirmed to us receipt of instructions to coordinate a joint demarche with this Embassy on Belarus, acting on behalf of the Luxembourg EU Presidency, . We said we would inform him as soon as our front-channel guidance arrives.  
HERTELL